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1922

**A Mother's Garden
of Verse**

Rosalind Huidekoper Greene



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A Mother's Garden of Verse

by

ROSALIND HUIDEKOPER GREENE



1922

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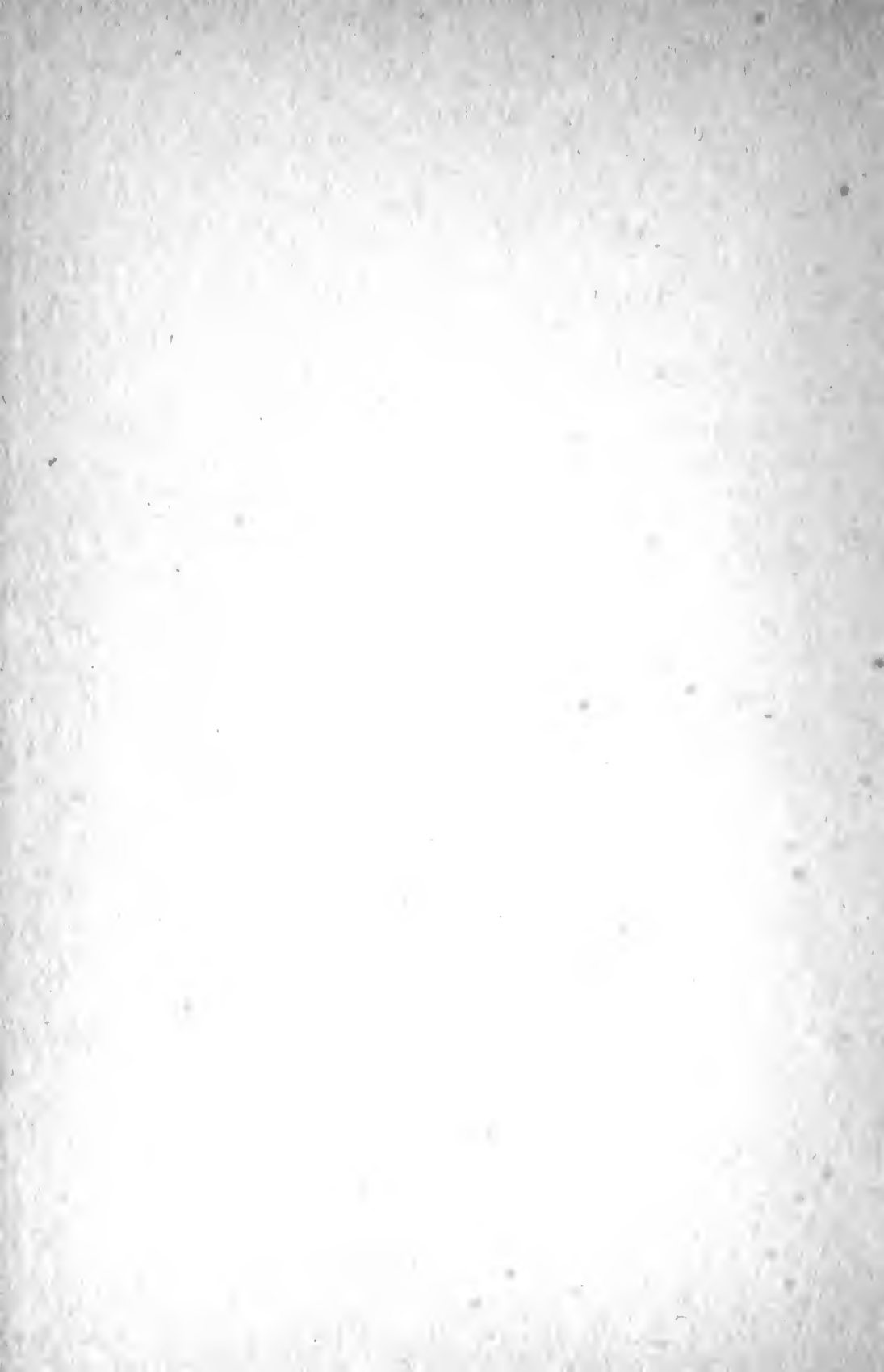
To Forestall A Probable Reviewer

“This volume is . . .

- “The effort of an earnest modern woman ;
- “Quite civic-minded—(Yes, they all are, now!)
- “And yet intent to bind upon her brow
- “The fillet of a fireside queen and wife :
- “Friends, children, nature, spiritual strife
- “Neatly served up ; and, just to show she’s human
- “Some serious love verse, (rather trite in phrasing).
- “The metre isn’t famous ; she is chary
- “Of crisp new tones ;—a dull vocabulary.
- “There’s courage there, the woman sounds alert ;
- “If not original, she is not pert ;
- “The pious tone may fall a little flat,
- “But insincere?—no, really, it’s not that.
- “And yet, alas, in the last stern appraising,
- “When to the starry hall of poets we bring
- “The little book, what verdict will it wring
- “Out of the glorious judges? Can they find
- “More than good-will, to which one’s always kind

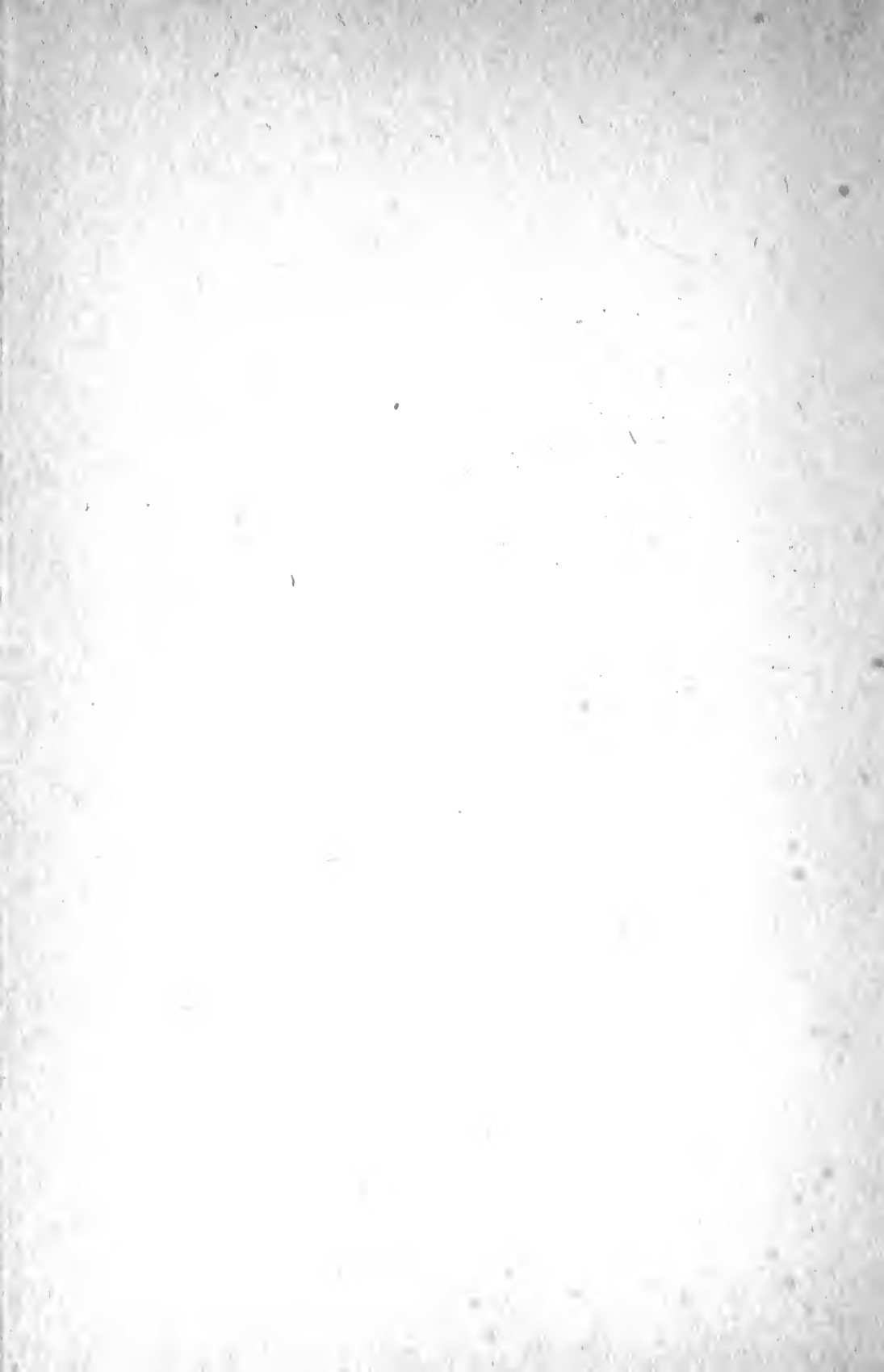
“But which commodity can hardly be
“Rechristened and reborn as poetry?
“One lays the verses down. Were they worth doing,
“Or, still more serious, are they worth reviewing?”

To
C. F. H.



Proem

There are not many themes
For song. Mirth, sorrow, dreams,
The hunger to be born again;
That other passion in the hearts of men
To make our earth a place
Worthy of the Creator's grace.
Of these we sing,
Poet, saint and lover, wearying
Oft of the frail
Imperfect songs that fail,
But never of the themes:
Love, sorrow, heavenly dreams.



CONTENTS

Page

LOVE

The Past	3
Ipswich, Sunday Afternoon	5
Once Your Dear Laughter	6
My Love Flies Over Seas	7
November 1920	8
Wistaria	9
Dreams	10
To One Far Away	13
Chartres	14

HOME

Home	17
River Houslin	18
Against Homes	19
Young Mother's Song	20
Nursery Rhymes	21
Union Station, Washington, June, 1917	22
Mothers	23

	Page
A Mother Speaks	24
By the Hearth	26
Exquisite and Merry One	27
Sonnet	28
To A Maiden	29
To a School Mistress	30
Father and Child	31
For Travellers	32
To Joy in Absence	33
To Katrine Rose	34
Song	35
Ernesta	37
Song	40
Antibes	41
The Mother's Company	43

FRIENDS

To a Dear Guest	47
An Evening Letter to a Friend	49
Ellen	50
William James	51
Ella	52
Agnes	53
To Ernest	54
A Saint at Play	55
The Intuitionist—Pragmatist	56

	Page
To Two Friends	57
To an Aviator	59
A Portrait	60

WAR

New York	65
The Pledged Word 1915	67
America 1915	68
Joy	69
At Night	70
Earl Kitchener	71
Rupert Brooke	72
The Emperor	73
New Air	74
Theodore Roosevelt	75
The Last Crusade	76

SUNLIGHT

To Brother Sun	79
The Poet's Catch	80
Newbury	81
An Easter Violet	82
Ferns	83
Calix Florium	84
The Dream	87
Lone Pine Hill	89

	Page
PRAYER	
A Song for My Lord	93
A Little Song for Death	94
To Those Who Make Formulas	95
Sisters of Worship	96
Grief's Rival	97
Sonnet	98
His Ways	99
Prayer	100
On Modern Talk of Sex	101
The Captain	102
Calvary	104
Prayer	105

LOVE



The Past

Death cannot take me from my dear,
For we have pierced too far
Each other's souls to fear
The jealous beauty of another star,
But who shall ever comfort me
For days he sorrowed long ago,
And I not near to comfort him, or know
How, in the forge of agony,
Faith's sword was hammered, out of woe?
Once a young wonderer, deep eyed, he stood
On edge of spring's enchanted wood,
Heart in flower and sword on high;
And once a little boy
Played solemn plays
Through solitary days
'Neath childhood's great still sky.
My darling, where was I?
These mated years of joy
And happy sharing,
Laughter, work, and staunch wayfaring,
Blessed are, without alloy;
But I am wistful to have been

Close by you,
Comrade in your baby sin,
Your mother weeping
To behold your lovely sleeping,
Your first young love, seen through a cloud of dew

Ipswich, Sunday Afternoon

From a steep crested hill, above the sea
'Mong wind-swept pines, we gazed forth to the east.
The earth was splendid as a bridal feast,
And past the tide-smooth beaches, leisurely
The ocean flashed. Through black trees we could see
Far water blue as sapphire; nearer by
Saw the shoal waters, by the sand-bar, lie
Light green and amber, gleaming limpidly.

O world of beauty, in the wind-washed air!
And yet, at last, the shore wind blew us free
Of ev'n that beauty. Past the world went we
To stand together for a little space
Beneath the wings of Death, and fearless there
We looked upon each other, face to face.

Once your dear laughter tossed my moods away,
Whirled off the fancies of the vanished years;
Flung down my scruples, dried my silly tears,
Blew out night's torch, flung wide the gates of day.
And after laughter, love spoke, princely gay,
Till all my quiet pulses leaped and stirred
Glad as a flag at sea, and swift the word
Was spoken that no speaking can unsay.

So love and laughter bound me for your own;
And grief, with iron consecration, came
To crown our single faith. But there's no name
For this new peace, beyond all dreams of youth.
Parting or meeting, we breathe air of truth:
Behold, I know, even as I am known!

My love flies over seas to fold you round,
Smooth as the wind. Unseen its tireless flow
And inescapable. Where'er you go
I go before. If you climb rocky ground
A lonely pioneer, my love has crowned
The cloudy heights; and in your hearth fire's glow,
Each tiny merry flame that chatters so
Is fanned by love, and sings with love's gay sound.

Burn up the silly words I write, but know
No fire can burn my thought; nor floods be found
To overwhelm and quench it. Out of mortal woe
And separation springs immortal power.
Lo, past the seas of death, in grief's dark hour
Strong as the wind, my love shall fold you round.

November 1920

After long rain, a north wind blew the sky
Into sharp brilliance. All the poplars bent
Like silver banners, when her spirit went,
Out from the little room, into that high
And timeless brilliance. Nothing seemed to die
Except my pain for her long pain. I knew
Neither whence came this wind, nor where it blew,
But it moved strong as immortality.

“Even in the Valley of Death’s shadow I
“Shall fear no evil,” and I had not feared.
But when death came, valley and shadow cleared,
And the slim trees that she had loved, I saw
Rain-fresh and splendid, while with tearless awe
I looked on her bright hills and wind-clean sky.

Wistaria

The slow and difficult tears
That from the deepest fountain of the heart
Painfully start,
Fell down her unstirred face.
For just at evening, when the work was done,
Each child laid down to rest in its own place,
And silent all the house, she saw the sun
Like a faint fading lantern shine
Through the wistaria vine:
She heard a voice, thousands of miles away,
Teasingly say,
“In Heaven we will dine
“On grapes as purple as those clustered flowers.
“The sun will be our dinner gong
“And through the pleasant evening hours
“You’ll sing me a sweet cradle-song
“Until I fall asleep.”
Her frozen courage thawed, and once more she
 could dream and weep.

Dreams

Where lies my well-beloved tonight?
Has courteous darkness shed
Its mantle round your sleeping head?
Or is the moon-filled, misty light
Like glistening samite spread
Magically white
On your crusader's bed?

I pray you, dream!
Not of the day's
Ordered and intricate ways,
But of some flashing mountain stream
Dashing down broken rocks, to gleam
Smooth in its lower flight
Between
Tall Northern firs, sharp-spined and keen.

Or dream of some old garden, set
With hearts-ease, and with mignonette,
Where soft as shadows on the grass,
Stately as in a minuet,
Memories turn and glide and pass;
Of sand dunes grey beneath the moon,
Measureless, dim,
A pallid desert stretching to the brim
Of the immense and grey-waved ocean,
Whose leisurely and irresistible motion
Sings a strange tune,
The exquisite long plash
Against smooth sand, the curling delicate crash
Of pebbles flung ashore in foam,
The tinkling, curious rune
As the retreating moonlit ripple calls them home.

Or dream of sunset after rain
In some deep-bosomed wood,
The dark, sweet-odored solitude,
The western fires, marked plain
With interlacing line on line
Of black-branched pine,
While in the vaulted flame-lit hush
Serenely float
Authentic note on note,
The slim, pure buglings of a hermit thrush.

Of such fair places, shadowy or clear,
Dream! Not of me, most dear,
Although I pray
For you by night, by day,
Although my love in silence lies
Always upon your sleeping eyes,
Quiet as darkness, and as near.

But into the innocent wonders of your dream
Wander alone, by stream
And garden, grove and moonlit sand.
In that sweet, haunted land
One wiser than I shall lift your tired hand,
And keep
My dear one safe among the mysteries of sleep.

To One Far Away

My hearth fire dies, the stars ride high,
And past them, in the winter sky,
My spirit wanders, swift and far,
Seeking your name in every star.

I am at peace. The Lord has given
Your love to me, and love is heaven,
And if He choose to take away
Your presence, shall I Him gainsay?

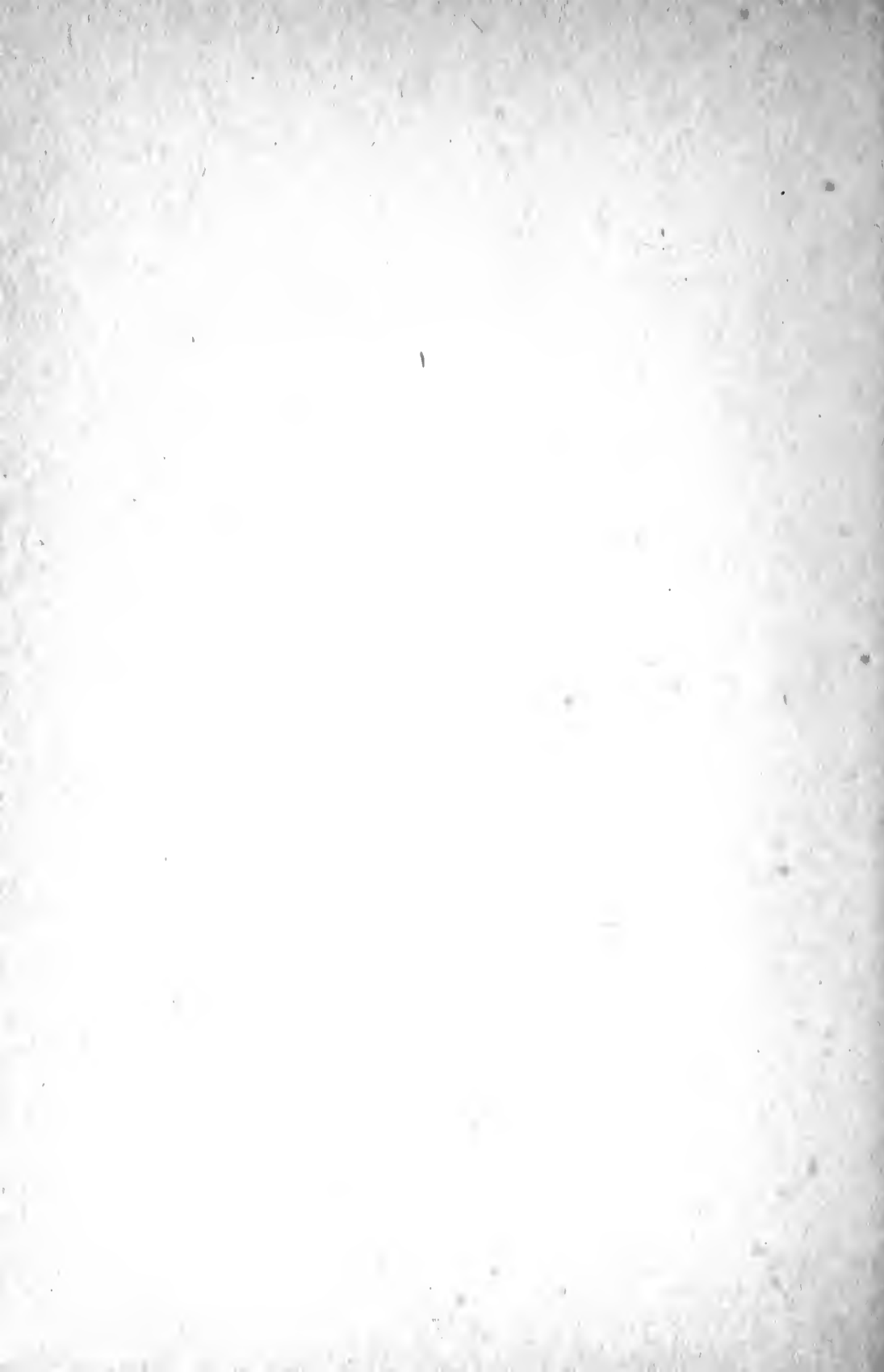
But in the evening stillness I
Leave earth's dear warmth, and past the sky
Travel like sea-foam on the wind,
Seeking to touch your absent mind.

Chartres

We'll go a pilgrimage some day
To France, to see the Virgin's shrine
And jewelled glass, your hand in mine
O Camerado, brave and gay!

Another pilgrimage we'll go
Together, or if one must wait
We'll call across the star-locked gate
Where Sister Death's great roses blow.

HOME



Home

Happiness, laughter, courtesy,
A house where children merrily
Obey their parents' word: a home
Where any friend may come
On any day or night,
To share new trouble or delight;
Where flowers bloom,
And winter hearth-fires light the room;
A place
Of work, play, argument and grace;
Where folly shall not be reproved,
And every nobleness is loved;
Where the Lord's name is said
Thankfully, ere morning bread.
O woman, you who ask
For some majestic task
To match you, can you find
A higher challenge for your mind,
A sweeter service for your heart,
Than this familiar work of art?

River Houslin

Where sunlight lies on open ground,
Where cedars top a rocky mound,
(A little river runnning round)
Where orchard trees the marshes bound,
Here let us come.

Where children's voices laugh and call
(O dreadful Indians in the hall!)
Where babies learn to romp and crawl
While kitties wrangle for their ball,
Here love finds room.

Where friends before the fire sit
With an old book of cherished wit,
While sweet uncounted hours flit,
(Tea comes; we jest and drink of it,)
Lo ,this is home.

Against Homes

Can it be fitting that the soul, whose name
Is called immortal, should so fiercely burn
With love for little places? Should so yearn
O'er a white house, and pear trees, and the flame
Of autumn sumach? Should so fondly claim,
As of one substance with itself, the turn
Of a tide river, and the fading fern
Edging the rock where wild babes shout their **game?**

Too sweet, too sweet is home, and like a net
Snares the wild soul, and soothes it, till, grown tame,
No more it mounts the thin, cold air of dream,
But slumbers happy by a mortal stream.
Beware, contented ones, lest ye forget
The lonely trails of glory and of shame!

Young Mother's Song

Walled from the world with triple walls
Of laughter, love and laboring,
I to my blessed baby sing,
While evening falls.

Bound to the world with threefold chain
Of laughter, love and labor sweet,
I kiss my dove, and happy greet
The dawn again.

Nursery Rhyme

Little rooms in a row,
Rose, blue, white as snow,
Amber yellow : little beds
Waiting for dear sleepy heads.
Nursery table, set so neat
Near the ground for little feet.
Milk in silver mugs, wheat bread
On a generous platter spread.
While from out the garden come
Children's voices, in a hum,
As if they like bees did sup
Honey from the day's gold cup.—
Mother waits upon the stairs,
Heart all laughter, peace and prayers.

Union Station, Washington

June 1917

Baby against your mother's breast!
Soft face, so softly pressed
Against her comfortable side;
O unknown woman with that face of pride,
And the strong arm, holding your baby furled
Fast in your shawl out of the jostling world,
Here in this vaulted station where trains meet
From half the continent, and hurrying feet
Bear famous men, and women very fair,
Soldiers and statesmen and old people, bent
On war or play, business or love's intent;
Behold, on that stiff seat and in this noisy air,
You two sit undisturbed there
O plain-dressed woman and your babe, withdrawn
As if you sat upon a flowering lawn
Where lambkins played, and where the mounting dawn
Made rainbow crowns above your hair!

Mothers

Mothers should be like the sky,
Shining, calm and very high.

Like the sun that warms one through
Makes one feel all glad and new.

Or a deep and quiet wood,
Friendly place for solitude.

Like a dictionary book,
Every answer at a look.

All this mothers ought to be,
But they're only—you and me!

A Mother Speaks

I'd like to loll and read,
And think deep thoughts on love and life and death,
But there's the pup to feed;
Francesca's knitting in a tangle, too —
"There, dear, I'll knot the blue.
Now start the pink stripe neatly underneath."
I wonder if the saints get out of breath
Scrubbing the heavenly stairs,
Or are they always kneeling at their prayers?
"Oh, children, see! The donkey's run away.
"He's in the field, tumbling the new-piled hay.
"Please tie him up."—"Joy, what's the happy news?
"Is that a sweet, new kittycat that mews?
"The blessed, furry, funny little dear!
"We'll cuddle it right here."
Eternal Lord, Whom all the stars obey,
Whose name the Seasons echo on their way,
Teach mothers how to live and how to pray.
"Cookies for supper? Yet, one each, and jam.
"Why is Katrine in sorrow? Tell me quick."—
"Mother, the baby lamb,
"That little baby lamb that was so sick,

“Is dead! Oh, mother, tell me why?”—

“My darling one, don’t cry.

“The precious thing is safe, because God’s love

“Was always round it here, and up above

“There will be pastures golden as the sun,

“Where your dear lamb can crop the flowers, and run

“All well again, beside a silver brook.”

“But, mother, I will miss him so!”

“Darling, I know, I know!”

O Father in Heaven, look

Tenderly down on my wee girly’s woe,

And comfort her; for how can I declare

The mystery of that wee lambkin’s breath,

Thy secret ways, so terrible and fair,

Thy wonderful ways of love and life and death?

By the Hearth

Tranced children's faces, listening to the story
Of ancient love and laughter; towns set fire
To appease some golden-greavéd King's deep ire;
Of woodland dells where fairies trip, of hoary
Old Merlin's cunning, and the legends gory
Of Cross and Crescent met; of shivering spears
In endless tourneys betwixt Tristram's peers.
So the young souls drink up th' immortal glory.

You listening ones, Francesca morning clear,
Katrine the subtle, Joy so quick to love,
How, when life calls, will you your spirits prove?
Still of high hearts and fearless, earth has need.
Still there are seas to cross; but hero's meed
Is death to suffer, though so fair to hear.

Exquisite and merry one
Dew in starlight, dawn-flushed snow
Sea foam in the beach-fire's glow
Sword blade in the sun!

Brilliant and divine and mild
As a roving star, you came
Like the sweet Saint John, whose game
Pleased the Holy Child.

Free limbed as a gypsy boy
Up the cedar hill you run.
Oh my white sword in the sun,
My beautiful, my joy!

Oh, you swift lovely summer-hearted child!
Rainbow and thunder and the fluting bird
Our brother hermit thrush, whom we two heard
Beyond the rain-wet pines now, till your wild
Limbs stopped their play, your grey eyes
 flashed and smiled.

Rainbow and lightning and the dawn-cold dew
And foaming mountain brooks are met in you,
Clothed in that amber body, curved and mild.

Dear One, I pray you, when past childhood's hours
You step down bravely into that stern place
Of the world's labor, keep your happy powers
Clear as this mountain air. Oh, let your pace
Be fleet and sure on earth. Let your soul's grace
Shine, as your eyes shine, 'mong these hemlock
 bowers.

To a Maiden

The silver lilies stand like spears
Before the wicket of your heart.
You have not any other art
To arm your fears.

And round your spirit's garden plot
The golden thistles burn like stars.
You have not any other bars
To say "come not."

But one will come in whose brave hand
The lilies will be soft as dew,
The thistles falling light; and you
Will understand.

To a School Mistress

As in the rhythm of a song
The singer is not bound but free
So moves my merry girl along
Your paths of ordered liberty.

School is no prison, and a book
No dungeon, for her happy mind.
She sparkles singing, like a brook
Whose bright shores rule, but do not bind.

Life has its torrents, storm and flood,
Its broken metres: but a truth
Deeper than these, chants in the blood
Of gallant and obedient youth,

Who know, unknowing, that the Law
Is, somehow, lovely. You, who make
Space for that melody, my awe,
My love and thankful honor take!

Father and Child

Your girl, with your own eyes,
Your gift of finding life a good surprise,
Your own impatience of an over-subtle world;
Hunger for fun and glory.
Behind her shoulder, as at yours, unfurled
I see a flag, and her feet tread a story.
Oh, princely pair, though other men may ponder
On deep and delicate things, you two will show
How bravely human hearts can go,
As in deep ways and delicate you wander,—
Eyeing all danger
As a most welcome stranger,
All joy
As holy, healthy food, without alloy,
And every pain,
All sorrowful mystery,
As solid links in the imperious chain
That makes men brothers,—So, erect and free
And chivalrous and unabashed, you fare,
You and your girlie, into earth's wide air.

For Travellers

My girlie going on the train,
There's the light, see, there again!
Over marsh and meadow rill,
While I, on my cedar hill,
Pray that all the trainmen are
Watchful of each signal star.
So my traveller, happy eyed,
Safely through the night may ride.

Even so, on some far day
(Ah, not so far away)
I shall watch the children fare
Forever past my hands' glad care.
And I must stay at home and pray
They shall meet upon their way
Faithful spirits who will burn
Each a brave torch in his turn,
Lighting up the the long straight road,
The dangerous path to God!

To Joy in Absence

I'm hungry for your flesh against my heart,
Quick little bolt of life, unversed in love,
Swift-footed at my voice. I long to move
My fingers on your neck, to pet and part
Th'untoward, tender stubble of your hair,
A comic crest above that vivid face.
My breast aches for your tired body's grace,
Naked at bedtime, in my hand's fond care.

Joy! Joy! My baby! Through my eyelids smart,
I see, beyond impatient years that rove,
A child, intent, impetuous, who shall wear
Forever such a look unshamed and fierce,
Keen lightning from the summer sky, to pierce
Past trifling, to the Truth's immortal face.

To Katrine Rose

My pigeon with the rosy feet,
My little sugarplum, my sweet,
Coo to me, pretty, I entreat.

My blood in waves of music swims,
At cuddled comfort of your limbs.
You smile; the day with magic brims.

Oh, little package of delight,
Seen in the candle's wavering light,
Rose-dimpled, tiny, hungry sprite.

Laughing, I hold you to my breast;
You take of me, and lo, I rest,
The earth grown homelike as a nest.

Tiniest, fiercest, wee, wild thing
Whose fingers, light as a butterfly wing,
Pat me in heavenly, jesting glee,
 Babykins, love you me?

What may love be to you, starling sweet?
Laughter and play and a bubbling fleet
Of sudden, exquisite, ecstasies,
 Whimsical browed surprise?

My love is a flower from the sod of death,
A torn, triumphant lift of the breath,
Cry for the truth among shades, new trust
 Sharp as a rapier thrust.

But you, swift of pace as a clatter of bells,
With eyes a-glitter like fairy wells,
And fingers like random stars at play,
 Truants into our day.

You creature of dew-washed, golden guile,
Whose kiss is a brushing of lips that smile,
A pressing of lips that nothing desire,
Cool as a moonstone's fire.

Is love then, a starry angelic jest,
Calmly poised, like a bird at rest,
Sailing with wings outspread? Whoknows?
My life, my star, my Rose!

Ernesta

Impassioned exquisite, of fleet
Ecstatic feet,
Your blue eyes, bluer than your gown
Flash black lightnings when you frown;
On your red and subtle lips
Elfin mystery curves and dips.

As in spring the swallow slips
From the steely river's brim
Up to the keen scented brightness
Of the blooming pear tree's whiteness,
So your swift moods whirl and skim
From dark grief to flashing lightness
Of unmeasured gayety.

We, the wearied laity,
Your grave lovers, in whose books
Life has printed many a page
Of reflection sage,
Of remorse and melancholy,
We behold your shining folly
And the storm cloud look

Of your free unfettered rage
 As the heritage
Of a conquering nature, sent
Fierce in all your merriment,
Fearless in your wrath and wilful
To destroy the dully skilful
Grown-ups in their ancient game
Of making brave new spirits tame.

Grief, we say
Is the Life, the Path, the Way,
Grief, the iron road for youth.
But your sudden beauties tell
 Of a fairer need,
A more puissant miracle.
How a little child shall lead
Laughing, to the citadel
Of the high and secret truth.

So at last,
Wisdom being overpast,
Love no longer being weakness,
Shall the soul impatient cast
Off its garb of ashen meekness,
And in glowing robes of pride
Shall leap past the haughty stars,
 Spurning all the bars

Of despair and prudent fears,
Cleaving the grey clouds of tears,
Past the foaming spheres,
 She shall leap
O'er the parapets of Heaven.
And there before the emerald throne
 Shall not weep,
Nor pittance of a beggar crave,
 But swift and brave
As one who cannot be denied,
 Ask her own,

As you, my childie, leave your wilding game
 And running to my side,
 Imperious, happy eyed,
My heart, my time, my instant kisses claim.

I have a wild poem in my head,
A clash and glitter of swift wings,
But Nesta comes into my bed,
Teases and kisses me and sings.

Why should we mothers seek in rhyme
To span the mysteries of space,
When, triumphing o'er space and time
Heaven shines for us in a small face?

And yet, O wilful laughing girl
Whose fingers brush my thoughts away,
Your little form of fire and pearl
Will throb, perhaps, like mine some day,

Beat with a message from some sphere
Far from our warm, familiar earth,
While in your deep young soul you hear
Strange wings, that clash in wheeling mirth.

Antibes

Girlies dance beside the sea,
Wild and gay, wild and free.
O'er their heads the sea gulls go;
On the purple Alps, the snow
Shines, rose-shadowed. In the bay,
Orange sails pass on their way.

Hercules, they say, once came
To this land. Perhaps his fame
Lingered still, when on the beach
Thundered the Greek traders speech,
And the Gallie chieftains gazed
On the high prowed ships, amazed.

Earlier still Phoenician oars
Touched the sand of these far shores.
And in Roman years there sailed
A small bark, where wept the veiled
Marys out of Palestine,
Bringing grief and hope divine.

Saracen and pirate crew
Swept like storm clouds o'er the blue.
Here crusading vessels passed ;
One, the children's ship, whose mast
Vanished ; one where Louis prayed
Courteous-souled and unafraid.

Oh fair images that pass,
Burning dream-shades in the glass
Of the burnished sapphire bay,
Bright you glitter, as my gay
Children, dancing wild and free
By the pools of Sister Sea.

The Mother's Company

The Mother walks among her dears
With happy eyes and quiet feet,
And close about her, as the sweet
Impatient children, flock past years.

This tall boy, Indian brown and slim,
Was once all cream and roses, curled
With rings of gold, who thought the world
Was a spiced honey cake for him.

The slender girl, red haired, grey eyed,
With a ship's chart in her strong hand,
A few years past would prancing stand
And fret to have her sashes tied.

Lo, he with cheeks wine-red today,
Once a white shadow on white bed
Lay through the weeks. His mother stayed
All day to nurse, all night to pray.

And there was one, with clearest eyes,
Clamoring for spoon to dig the sand,
O happy girl, who on some strand
Plays now with pearls in Paradise!

The Mother walks among her dears
With dreaming eyes and steady feet,
And close about her as the sweet
Impatient children, flock past years.

FRIENDS



To a Dear Guest

In this small room I leave to you,
Dear friend, I pray you find
No token how I grieve for you,
But happily enshrined,
The high things I believe of you,
And comfort for your mind.

And while I humbly learn from you
Your courage for this hour,
The lilacs here will burn for you
With beauty past my power;
The slender plum-boughs turn to you
Their sprays of foaming flower.

The swift, sweet birds will sing to you
The things I cannot say;
Night's dewy breeze will fling to you
The little prayers I pray;
The eastern light will bring to you
My love and my good day.

Soon all my ways will part from you;
My friendship shall not fade!
Swift as the swallows dart to you
Across the cedar glade,
I will send back my heart to you,
Singing and unafraid.

And if I go through death from you
Fear not, but come again!
Here will I keep my faith with you
And you will hear me plain
Speak with immortal breath to you
In wind and flower and rain.

An Evening Letter to a Friend

“Only a poem?” Francesca says.
And in her clear and scornful gaze
I read the folly of my ways.

For paper’s very white and thin,
And ink is streaky black like sin,
And how shall love be clothed therein?

If I had leaves of maple gold,
And dipped my pen in aureoled
Rivers that down from morning rolled;

If all the words were shaped like shells,
Inwrought and lovely; sang like bells;
Glittered like snow on moonlit fells;

If silver cymbals beat the time,
And clashed to close the captured rhyme,
While clarions rang an echoing chime;

Why then, perhaps, I’d dare to write
A little poem for your delight.
But now I only cry, “Goodnight!”

Ellen

Deep, still, and gay,
My Ellen lives beside us day by day.
As elegant as fairy ladies are,
As softly shining as the May month star.
As practical as Martha; yet so wise
That, by her smile, she turns whole destinies.
And, lest our reverence should chill our love
While her white fingers 'mong the tea cups move,
Her leisured moonlit accents tell a story
Of wit and malice and of worldly glory.

William James

Without him, where is delight?
This man bore a flag for us all.
The turn of his head flashed light,
His look was a call.

A warrior, he cried to the Lord,
A prophet, he saw men's need;
His words gleamed out like a sword
That folly might bleed.

Those arrows of beautiful speech,
Wit barbéd, meteor keen,
Destroy every sham they reach
And Truth blooms between.

Death's chalice of night he drank;
Now stars meet his equal eyes.
And God for our friend we thank,
Though lonely earth lies.

Ella

O towers of silver and turrets of white fire,
Enchanted castle of my dear friend's heart,
Castle of faith and mystical desire
Where saintlike, she might live alone, apart!

Lo, from the drawbridge, with its chain of stars
My Lady passes forth, her flag unfurled,
And walks in silver might as stern as Mars,
Inexorably blessing the torn world.

Agnes

In love she is a woman, in laughter she's a girl;
Blown into our dull lives on the west wind's whirl.

Strong swooping seabirds, above a rocky steep,
Wing their circling splendor in her gown's quick sweep.

Prophet or fairy or puck-browed gnome,
She cajoles them snugly to feasting in her home.

If the stars were naughty, sure she'd punish all,
Then kiss and set them frolic free, the moon for their ball.

Brown braid crownéd I've seen her laughing stand
Merry in the morning, her broom in her hand.

So in my heart's mind, I've seen her stand and lead
Armies, her broom grown a living spear at need.

To Ernest

Prophet, carpenter and friend,
If the whirling worlds should end,
And God called on you to frame
New ones, worthier of His Name :
Please, then, make a better me
Still your humble friend to be.

A Saint at Play

Where rainbows talk the talk of men
And all the swords of hate are sheathed,
In that sweet air my darling breathed
Ere she came strolling to our ken.
The elves and angels crowned her when
She jested with the saints, and wreathed
Her forehead with wild stars, bequeathed
That beauty might be known again.

Now in the hurrying camp of earth
Where hearts and mornings break in tears,
Echoes the bugle of her mirth.
Calling the captains by their name
She smiles: and like a silver flame
Virtue in every heart appears.

The Intuitionist-Pragmatist

There was a young girl who said "Oh,
"If there is any truth, it aint so.

 "Two and two look like four,

 "But perhaps they are more;

"Ask me why, and I tell you, I *know!*"

To Two Friends

Pray, darlings, write a letter,
A telegram or post card, if naught better!

There is no pressing reason you should write
Except the swift delight
I feel when letters with the mark
Of your dear hand appear,
To bless a busy hour, cheer
A stupid spirit, light the cumbered dark
Of solitary thinking with the spark
Of friendship's fiery hieroglyph in sky.

And there are hours
Of a dumb wrestling with the heavenly powers
When faces are too poignant, words too near;
Then will a letter lie
Like a more potent amulet at breast
Being assurance, rest
And comradeship of deepest sanctity.

A name to paper given,
Written in love, is a gold key to heaven;
A flag more haughty than the topmost trees,
A wild, glad breeze,
To blow the breath of fairy, foreign seas
Into the closet of the mind.

And so, be kind.
Send me a post card, telegram, or even better,
A little darling letter!

To an Aviator

Youth is a talent, not a common fact.
All boys are immature : how many act
With headlong, generous splendor, as you did
One day in France, oh dear, immortal Sid ?

Death passed you by, but in his passing threw
Shadowless light on young, unfearful you.
So in the years to come, we'll see you still
As golden youth, winged with a flying will.

A Portrait

Familiar, unfamiliar face!

The cunning artist set aside

The armored look of your habitual pride,

And with his sure and delicate brush did trace

The musing moods you oftenest hide.

Calm browed, grave eyed,

With the ironic grace

Of concentrated will that for the moment slips

Into a weary stillness on your lips.

Yes, and the fierce, ambitious thirst for duty,

Hunger for conquest, for self-conquest, only

That your impatient soul and lonely

Might scorn the battle won; these, touched with mirth

At man's importancies, his petty scale of worth;

All, crowned with your relentless chivalry,

All this is there, set in authentic beauty,

The mortal soul of you, immortally

Portrayed.

Yet do not be afraid!

The scrupulous painter, with his brush of flame

Has seized your secret, but the fame

Is his forever. When we all are dead
And stranger generations view
The living fineness of that head,
The deep, down-looking eyes
That never lighted for a little prize;
The lips, so firmly lined,
Tragic with many a spoken word unkind,
But never twisted by a word untrue;
Then, not of you
Shall wondering things be said.
The painter's skill, the genius of his choice,
In these will the yet unborn seers rejoice,
Careless of every struggle that prepared
His model for him; whether you despaired
Or triumphed at the last; all this ignoring.

But of that curious throng
One may arrive,
A girl, it might be, with gay smile, imploring
The past to open, you to come alive,
And speak to her impetuous youth
Some whisper of your hard won truth;
A man perhaps, with strong
Unthwarted purpose, who would fain discern
The source of your lips stern
Assurance and command;
Or, one may pause and stand

Longer than these, a woman, in whose eyes
All happiness lies drowned, but a surmise
Sweeter than happiness shines very fair.
Lo, she will turn
Her clever, tired gaze
Amusedly upon your portrait there,
Will unembarrassed dare
To recompense
That shadow of your spirit with the gift
Of exquisite intelligence,
With pity, love and praise.
Pity for pain endured and for the pride that still
Forged your new pain, praise for the reckless will
Love for the whole of you, as swift,
As charming as her hand's quick lift
To touch the gilded frame
While her eyes seek upon the canvas dark,
Some token, near the painter's mark,
Of your mysterious, unremembered name.

WAR



New York

Vast city, gaunt and desolate,
Unlovely in the morning murk,
Where myriad faces pass and wait
With tired frown and smirk;
Do those fierce gods who give thy gold increase
Withhold the gift of peace?

Lo, where shall peace be found? In glare
Of evening's white electric smile?
Or on a clanging thoroughfare
Where, mile on mile,
Huge drays and jangling trams and motors rife
Bellow their roadway strife.

The children peer through tangled hair,
As quick they dart along the squalid street.
We dream of youth in springtime's blossomed air,
But here we greet
Frail bodies, elfin swift, with feverish intent,
On city errands bent.

“A nation’s heart,” “the arteries of trade”;
Did God, then, quicken our great land to seek
No more than this harsh loaf of daily bread?
Shall no man speak
Those words that to the hungry people give
Vision, by which men live?

The Pledged Word

1915

Man does not keep his word ; the word keeps him.
It is his armor against evil chance,
A shield from which all traitorous weapons glance,
A guard of stern, implacable cherubim.

Man cannot break his word ; the word outraged
Is still the master, man the wretched prey,
Rent, tortured, bleeding, whom Truth scorns to slay,
Till all her dreadful vengeance is assuaged.

Look now on Europe. Belgium safe in pain,
Bleeding, betrayed, immortal, glorious,
Crowned with high crowns, three times victorious,
Throned near the altar of her blessed slain.

And look on Germany, who tore the scroll,
Laughed at the compact, sneered at Truth and Faith,
Behold, she learns in pangs of long-drawn death,
That little scrap of paper was her soul.

America

1915

My nation, are you bound in golden chains,
Thrall of prosperity and sleek content?
Have you forgot the passionate intent
With which Columbus sailed? The bitter pains
Of pilgrim winters? Valley Forge? Have gains
Of heroes at Fort Wagner now grown dim?
And Lincoln dead! Is there no blood of him
Pulsing his message through the country's veins?

Look upon France, where tearless maids and wives
Clasp on the sword, and men give up their lives,
As altar candles, set about the Grail,
Are trod by Vandals. What if we should fail,
Drugged with sweet words and over-fed desire,
To light again that trampled altar fire?

Joy

My girlie labors at her lesson book
With whispering baby lips and grave young eyes,
And I gaze past her to the wintry skies,
Out from the warm glow of our chimney nook.
Behold, strange shapes there! For I seem to look
On Russia, in convulsive agonies;
A land of snow and chaos, bloody cries,
A nation whom all Gods have now forsook.

How shall the world be saved? By fire and sword,
Wrath, strategy, diplomacy, the sum
Of cunning statesmanship? Or will peace come
Wrought by all hearts that in their childhood learn
Truth, love and liberty's impassionate word
In quiet homes where the gay hearth-fires burn?

At Night

Oh, surely it was right my man should go
And do his bit in France. I would not keep
Him by me. Yet, sometimes I long to know
Where does my comrade sleep?

I have no son to pray for. He is all —
Son, husband, father, lover, perfect friend.
He was not brave to go: there came a call;
He was the one to send.

We had ten years of blessedness. I pass
Crowned, shod with them. I do not droop or weep,
Only at night I look across the grass
And wonder, "Does he sleep?"

Earl Kitchener

Fear death? I who have dealt it forth like fire
On withered grass,—have seen my men fall sheer
Like corn before the reaper,—shall I fear
Because the black waves, crested green, rise higher
In tattered pinnacles and walls of ire?
Their power is stayless, though untorn by shells
Which ploughed the North Sea into whistling hells
For Hood's six thousand. And shall I require
The pillowed cosseting of fools that weep?
What though my toil be done for England's faith,
My plan of grim, unbreakable design,—
Strangling the foe within our circled line,
That shall not die. Nor do I balk at death;
For I have sown, and there be men to reap!

Rupert Brooke

The deathless dead stood up and challenged him
Who strolled so proudly into their proud place.
His golden curls shone with the lordly grace
Of an archangel's helm. Each lovely limb
Glowed like white sunlight, though his hands were grim
With earthly battle, and his perfect face
Bore fiery marks. They gazed a little space.
And asked who entered to their regions dim.

Then from his throat the fearless music came
Of English words: "No risen soldier tells
"So poor a thing as his mere mortal name
"Who died for England in the Dardanelles."
And the great ghosts in answer lifted up
The flashing welcome of Death's loving cup.

The Emperor

Above the year-long battle field
In Flanders and in Hungary
High o'er the silvered Alps, I see
The Emperor who will not yield.

The Lord and Prince, the Crucified,
Hangs on His Cross, through crimson years.
And every hiss of pain He hears,
And every bullet tears His side.

God gave us to Him for His own,
And so each foe and infidel
Prisoner and spy, He knows full well,
Yea, every wife who weeps alone.

And when we say we hold Him dear,
Christ thunders from His Cross above
"Blaspheme not! Say not me ye love,
"Until you love your brothers here."

Above the year long battle field,
The North Sea graves, the agony
Of trench and marsh and sand—I see
The Emperor who will not yield.

New Air

How can we breathe this air?
We, used to leaden vapors of despair;
To the slow, laboring breath of the oppressed,
Mornings of foggy pain and nights of choking rest?

We,
Suddenly set free —
How can we draw
Draughts of this air, surcharged with holy awe;
Pure, tingling, wonderful, limpid as dew,
The air of freedom! Is the vision true?
Shall we, who dreamed of liberating death
Stand up, alive and free, and taste the breath
Of peace, of peace? The conquest given
To righteous arms at last? Is it the air of Heaven
That stings like starlight, is it earthly air
That floods our breasts, that surges like a prayer
Through heart and limbs? Oh, Lord, Who gave
Us strength in suffocating darkness, give us power
To greet this morning, make us brave
To bear the glory of this hour.

November 11, 1918.

Theodore Roosevelt

O great American, who stayed
At home while armies fought for right,
There was no mist upon your sight
There is no rust upon your blade.

Today you walk with all the rest
Who died for freedom ; and His hand,
Who holds the single High Command,
Shall place the War Cross on your breast.

January 6, 1919.

The Last Crusade

When shall the nations come, O Lord,
To stand like children at Thy side,
Dropping their rusted toy, the sword,
Forgetful of their fear and pride?

Like eager children, who have heard,
Above the shouting of their game,
A halting cry, a haunting word,
Tale of a new and dangerous fame.

And so, like children who forget
Their hate, when fresh adventure calls,
Hark to the legend, passionate
And challenging, of Rome that falls;

And of Jerusalem that waits,
Across the dreadful seas of love,
Till nations storm her flashing gates,
And all mankind are Lords thereof.

SUNLIGHT



To Brother Sun

Patient, miraculous, triumphing sun,
All pervading, magnificent One,

Fire of Fire and Heat of Heat,
Are you the throne of the Mercy Seat,

Or are you but a wee taper, lit
In the court where God's least angels sit?

The Poet's Catch

What shall I catch in my net of words?
Thunderclouds, meteors, children, birds?
But first of all and last of all
The Lord God's fingers, holding our small
And darling world, like a golden ball.

Newbury

After long absence seen afresh
My little land, my own!
Flesh truly of my very flesh,
Bone of my bone.

God in His gracious wisdom made,
Not of two clays but one,
My heart and this dear orchard glade
Lit with late sun.

The ferns shed on my soul new light,
And, as the evening tide
Drowns the salt marshes here tonight,
Full brims my pride.

Flesh of my very flesh, Kind Lord,
Is here each flower and stone,
And every cedar like a sword;
Land of my own!

An Easter Violet

Grew this flower in my garden?
No, it grew in my own heart.
I felt the tiny rootlets part
The ground that only sin can harden,
That only sorrow's rainy art
Can soften. A blue flame of pardon,
I saw the lovely flower upstart,
And with its green leaf like a dart,
Beheld it thine, dear love, who art
The Lord of all my garden!

Ferns

Violets tell of Paradise
Spring, and birds, and lovers' greeting.
Lilies tell of sacrifice,
Roses are for joy of meeting.

Sweeter than all flowers that bloom,
Cool and pure and frail and tender,
Are the ferns that in the gloom
Of the woodland rise up slender.

Flowers to the earthly sense
Speak their secrets, heart to heart.
Ferns to the intelligence
Do their subtler tale impart.

So let all the senses sleep ;
Let the spirit wake and brood,
Where the ferns wave in the steep
Shadowed coolness of the wood.

Calix Florum

How shall I quench my thirst for flowers?
For amaryllis blazing fair
Beyond the cool space of the lawn;
White Shirley poppies, pale at dawn
Trembling like sea foam on the air.

And April bowers

Where the new grape leaves shine
Flushed with red promise of the wine.

I crave the harebell's perfect blue,
The wise, dear scent of mignonette;
A quince bud's sculptured pearl and rose:
May hawthorn bloom, like dawn-tinged snows,
And, in the garden border, wet

With evening dew,

Small sprays of heliotrope
That wound the mind with memory and hope.

How shall I drink the beauty deep
Of wild-rose tangles near the sea,
Tossed by the south-west wind that passes,
Whipping the delicate dune grasses
To lines, of quivering silver glee,
 That bend and sweep
 Their small rings on the sand,
Like circles by a fairy's hand?

I thirst for the high pastures where
The laurel, virginal and stern,
Blooms in her vestal solitude ;
And for the friendly little wood,
Above the mill stream's noise, where burn,
 Priestly and rare,
 The unforgettable fires
Of midsummer cardinal spires.

I thirst, I drink, I am not fed ;
These beauties run in every vein ;
Like love, they will not be denied ;
Like love, they are not satisfied :
O flowers fraught with splendid pain,
 Uncomforted
 Among your glories, I
Give thanks, still yearningly.

Not till your many blooms, in one
Immortal wine dissolve and glow,
Mixed with the sea and wind and mist
And mountain peaks of amethyst,
Not till into the wine bowl flow
 The stars and sun,
 O flowers, can you fill
The deep thirst of one human will!

The Dream

I found a garden in my dream, all lilies, roses
And heliotrope and secret shady closes.
Alleys were there, bordered with gorgeous phlox,
Larkspur and foxglove and tall hollyhocks,
Snapdragon, winey spiced, and gillyflowers;
And there were bowers
Where, 'mong the deep bells of the trumpet vine,
I saw the humming birds, tiny and splendid, shine.
Near by, a pool
Fringed round with sword leaved iris, keen and cool :
A little plot
Of rose tipped daisies and forget-me-not,
And by a sun dial's melancholy plinth,
A bed of pure new fern and summer hyacinth.
The air was hung with tangled odors, sweet
In the day's fading heat ;
Up from the river bed the swallows flew
Across the amber sky, while the first dew
Fell soft on heart and flowers. Then at the garden's end
I saw my lost, beloved friend.
Smiling he stood a moment : swiftly came

Striding amid the twilit bloom; but when he
spoke my name
The beauty grew too beautiful, and broke:
The garden faded, and I woke.

Lone Pine Hill

Triumphant caravans of praise
Stalk the procession of my days.

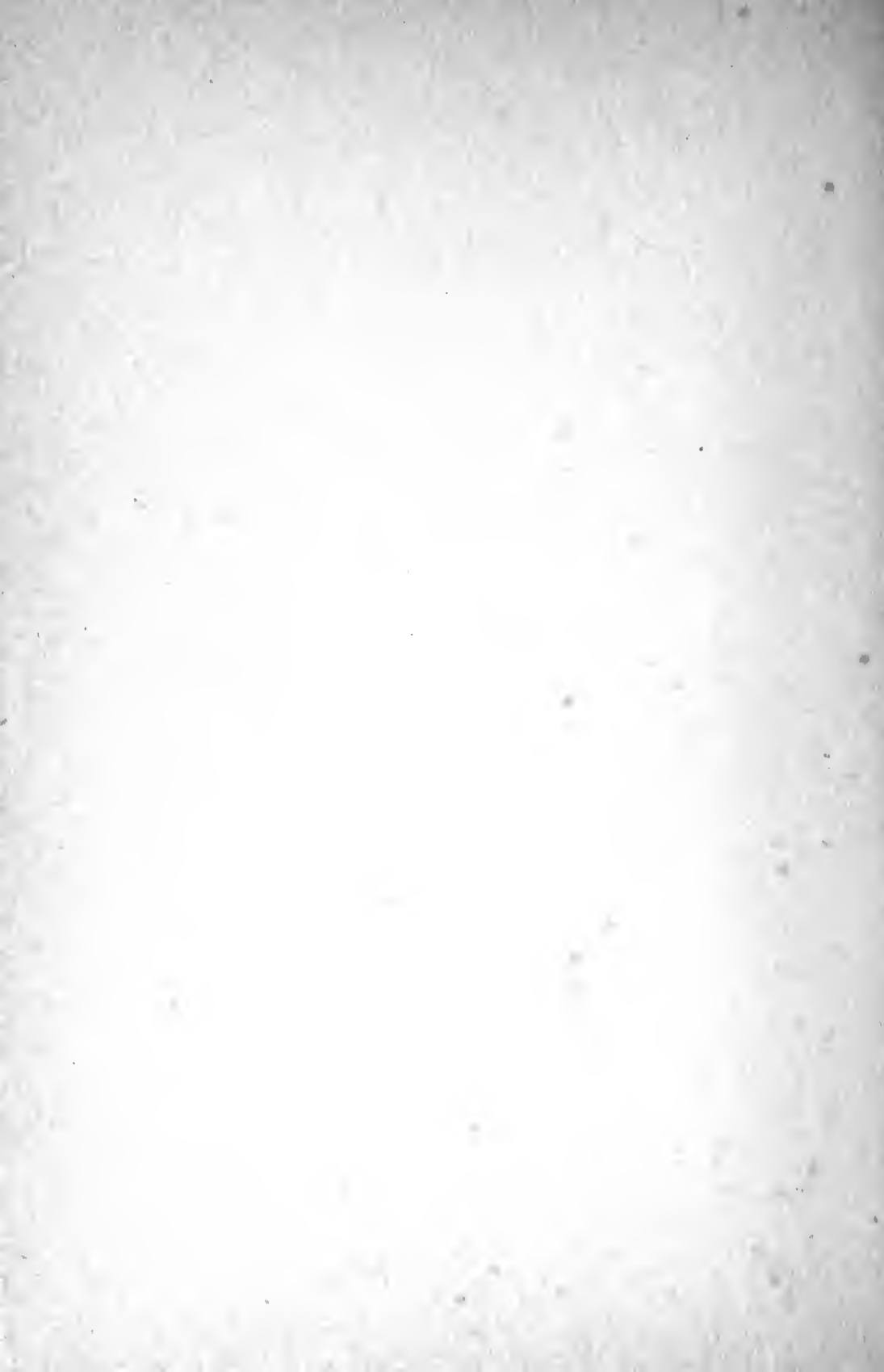
What treasure from the jewelled Ind
Is curious as a good child's mind?

What fairy nymphs o'er waters rule
More limpid than my mountain pool?

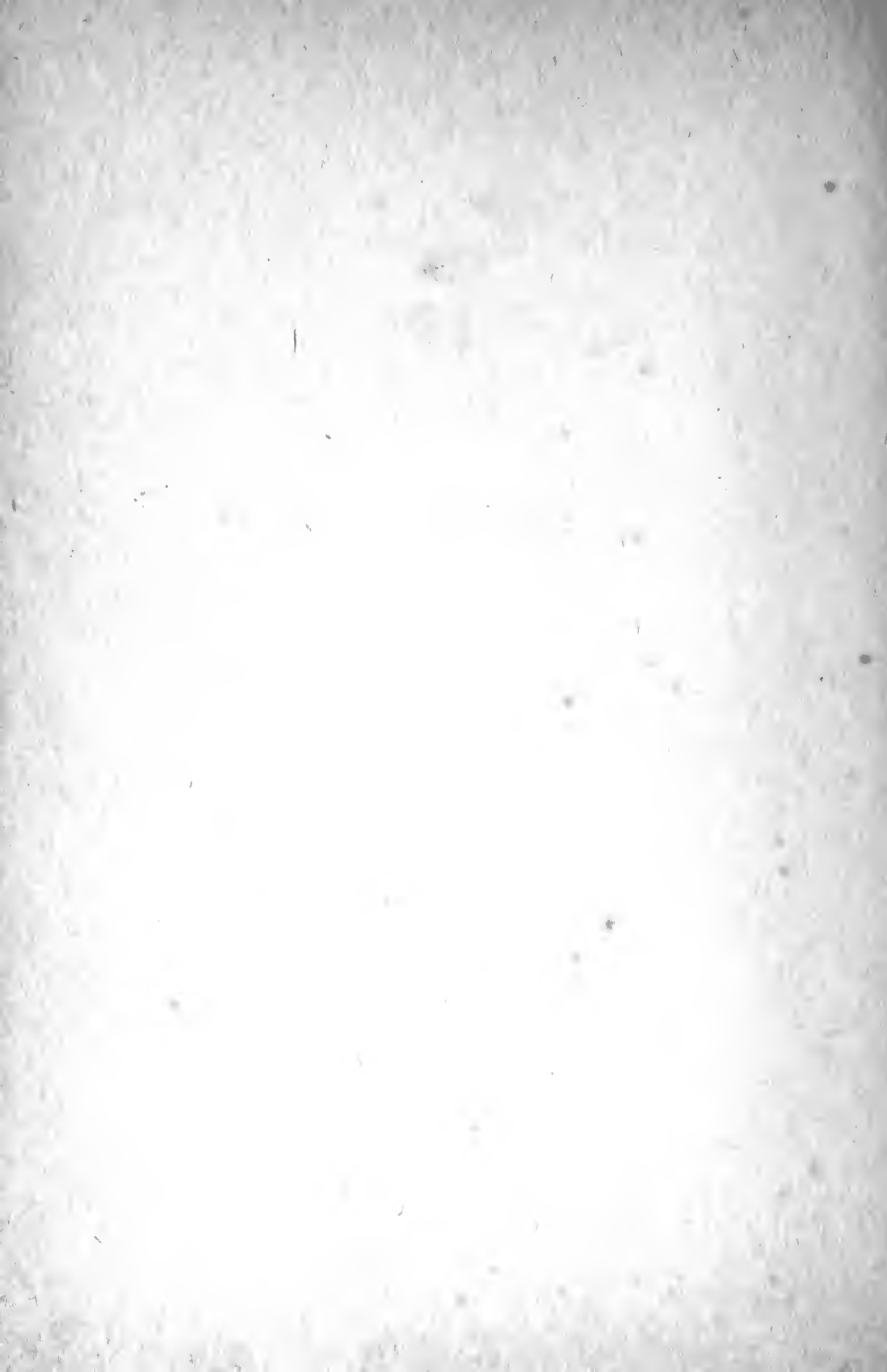
Can nightingale or skylark sing
As did last evening's thrush on wing?

What unicorn or griffin shines
More dreadful than my porcupines?

Triumphant caravans of praise
Stalk the procession of my days.



PRAYER



A Song for My Lord

Others bring Christ their pain, dismay,
Their terror and their sadness;
My humble gift is bright and gay,
A little song of gladness.

Yes, I have sorrowed. And I know
Christ bends above our weeping;
But he has many burdens, so
My joy is for his keeping.

For I am joyful, Christ my Lord,
Glad as the April swallow;
Over me blows your mighty word
And all my heart cries "Follow."

A Little Song for Death

An arrow dropping through the snow
Sure of its buried mark,
So straight and still my heart will go
Into the silver dark.

A sword blade, cleaving swift and clear
Through glistening sea-foam,
So will my heart, stripped clean of fear,
To death's deep place go home.

To Those Who Make Formulas

We've tethered truth in one neat word,
As those who would the whirlwind bind.
But suddenly a gust is heard!
All the tall ships and trees are stirred,
While truth goes free, and leaves behind
Only a neat and empty word.

Sisters of Worship

Three sisters point the way to prayer :
Work, climbing up her rocky stair,
With look of faith to sunlit hills ;
Beauty, that like a woodthrush trills
Dissolving music in still lands ;
And love, deep-bosomed, with grave hands
And eyes that give and ask and bless,
Lighting the soul to holiness.

Grief's Rival

Sorrow cried to me, and said,

“Joy I am not jealous of,

“And I do not envy love,

“One foe only do I tread.

“And his name is little grief,

“Worry, trivial sorrowing.

“From my wealth he's borrowing

“Always, the ignoble thief.

“When I strike a happy heart,

“Or a heart all love-entwined,

“Deep the blow strikes, and the mind

“Deeply ponders on the smart.

“But when to a worried soul

“Sorrow enters, my intrusion

“Only adds to the confusion,

“Cannot cleanse and make it whole.”

How the flesh craves to melt its form and be
One word, one act, a single arrow sped
Straight at life's target; one clear torrent shed
Down a deep gulch into the thirsting sea.
Oh, to exchange this long complexity
Of heart and senses and the laboring head
Into a leaping wholeness! To be paid
All in one moment to Eternity.

What wind is there to sweep us from the dead
Shards of old purpose? What shall set us free
From tangled groping? Can naught make the whole
Of man's poor dust into a flame-swift soul?
The answer thunders round us as we pray.
"I am the Path, my children, and the Way."

His Ways

God's time is very large: He counts men's hours
With a calm hand, as children gather flowers.
The measured majesty of moon-moved tides,
The fiery breath of Aetna, these He guides
With silver rods of wisdom and of love;
And all our feverish terrors doth reprove,
Bidding us bring our troubled hearts to rest,
Safe in His word, as birdies on their nest.

Prayer

Prayer is a silence, wind and fire.
A fire to burn the shell of sense,
And leave us naked to our day.
A wind to blow desire's mists away.
A silence infinite, intense,
Deep as the whirlpool's centre whence
The waters of life are flung in surging spray.

On Modern Talk of Sex

Stars, flowers, thunder, music, thought, all these
Are keys to open life's dear mysteries.
Why call one key a name so bare and crude
That it can only force the doors to rude
And graceless visions?

Oh, you modern youth,
Who prate so glibly of the "naked truth,"
Truth, shod with stars, and clad in flowers and thunder
Has fled from you, and on the Hills of Wonder
Walks between thought and love and glorious
death.
. . . Repent and pray, ye children of unfaith!

The Captain

Oh arrogant and meek, Adored,
Our Savior, Minister and Lord,
Who brought us peace and eke the sword!

“Light is My burden, mild My yoke,”
The Man who looked on sorrow, spoke;
And thunderous echoings awoke.

His own neck bent beneath the load
Of that fierce cross that points to God.
Men spat upon Him in the road.

He bids us bring our grief, and rest
Like little children in His breast,
Till sudden hear we His behest,

“Sell all thou hast, thy life give up,
“Drain utterly the outcast’s cup;
“On persecution drink and sup.”

O Prince of Peace, Who washed the feet
Of sinners, and sat down to meat
With startled wantons of the street,

Your life for me is scourge and light,
Refuge and accusation, bright
With love, and dark with awful might.

But over all your deeds, above
Tempestuous woe and flame-bright love,
One saying floats, a golden dove,

The word of Him whose sorrows flow
Resounding through the ages, "Lo,
"Forgive them, God, they do not know!"

Calvary

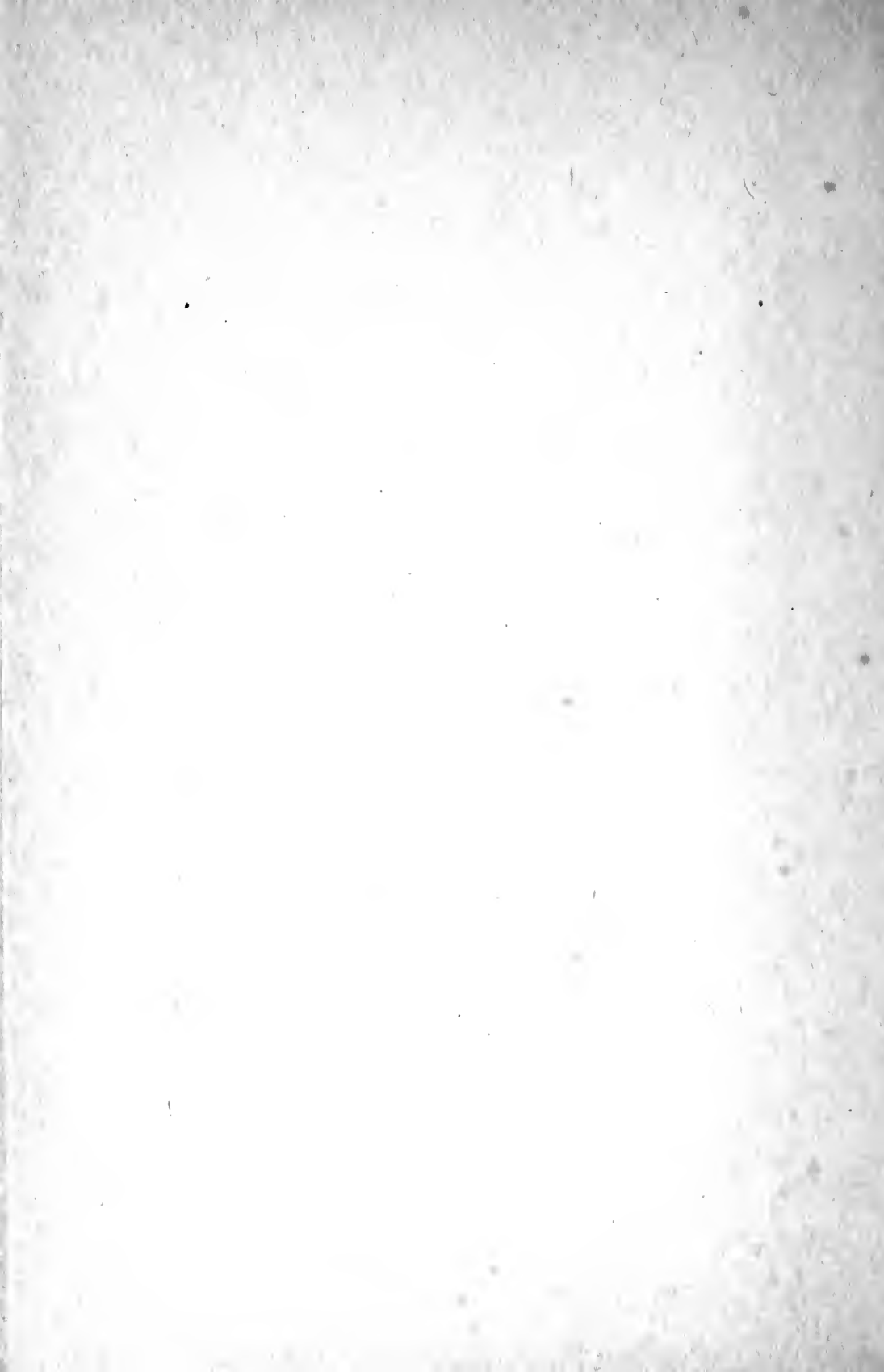
That night of riven rocks and bloody dew,
Christ in his anguish saw his brothers stand
Lusting for death ; beheld each upraised hand
A flag of shame. Faint on the cross he knew,
Century long, would all men, I and you,
Deny our saviors ; and with one great cry
His love, as lightning, pierced the farthest sky,
“Father, forgive, they know not what they do.”

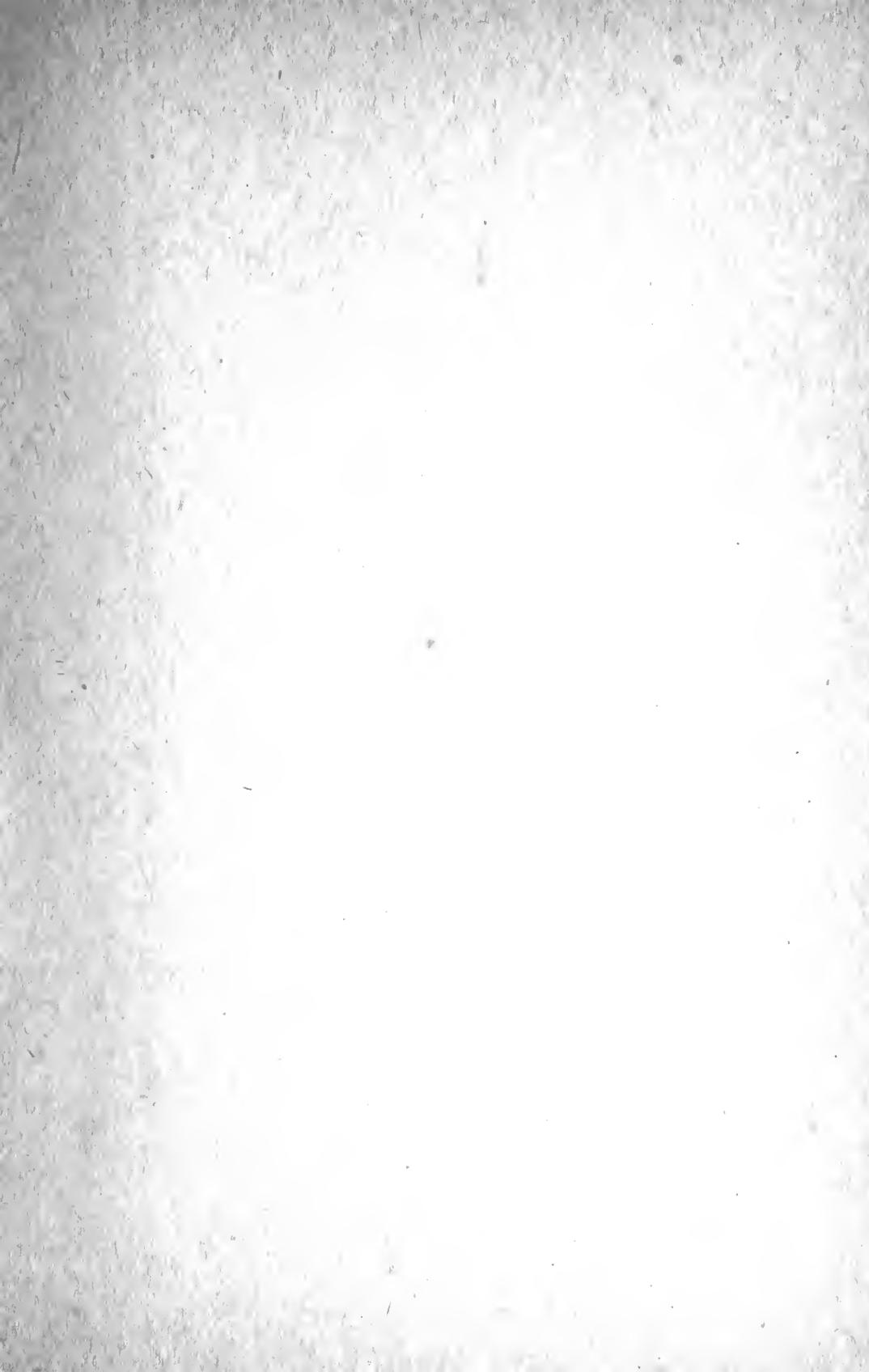
O tenderness more terrible than fire,
O mercy, mightier than raging seas,
His word still burns away our false desire,
And washes down our sandbuilt caves of ease,
Till, saved by flood and flame, each sinner knows,
God pardons even us, Truth's paltry foes.

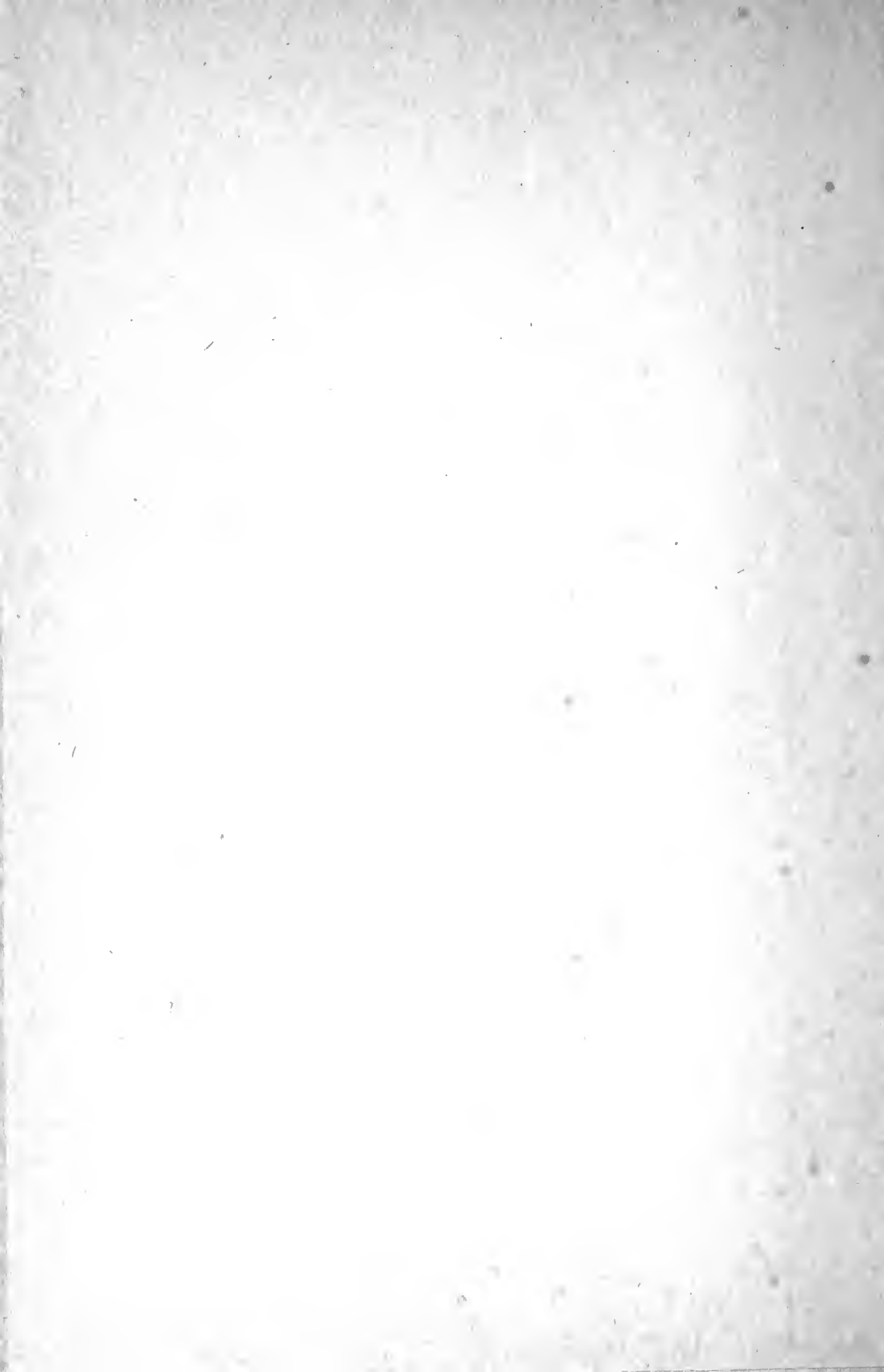
Prayer

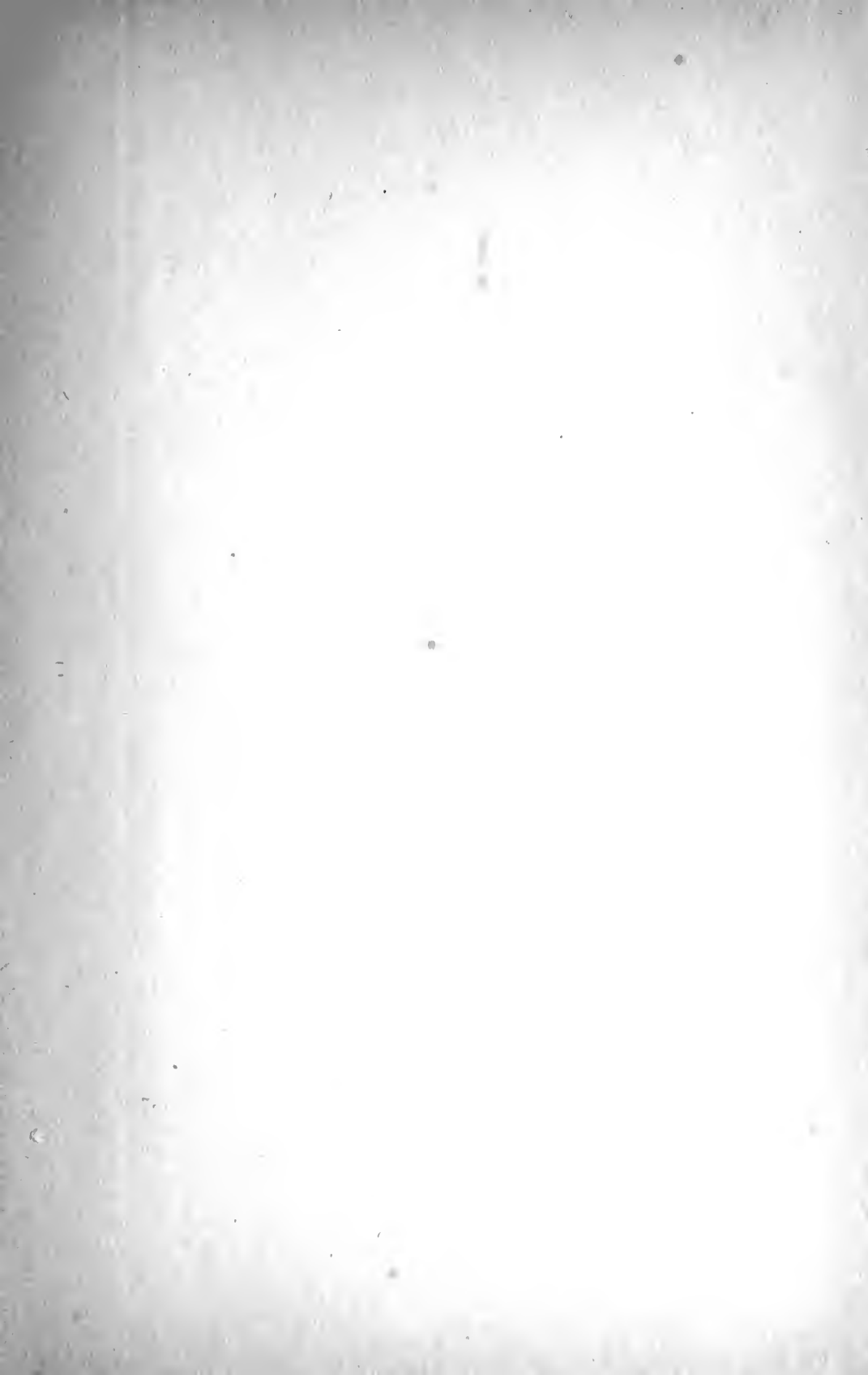
Into God's grace I dive, as under seas
Deep, dim and cool, the tired body slips,
Leaving the wave crests and the pluméd ships,
The seething storm wrack and the rainbow leas,
To cleave clear down, through emerald silences,
Into the heart of silence, where light dies,
And darkness has no colour, and sound flies,
And quietness broods on through centuries.

Even so today, in one long plunge of prayer,
Spurning the wind rocked waves of love and care,
The buffeting stress of life's insistencies,
I dive deep into silence of God's will,
Profounder than the utmost seas' abyss,
Wordless and wonderful and very still.

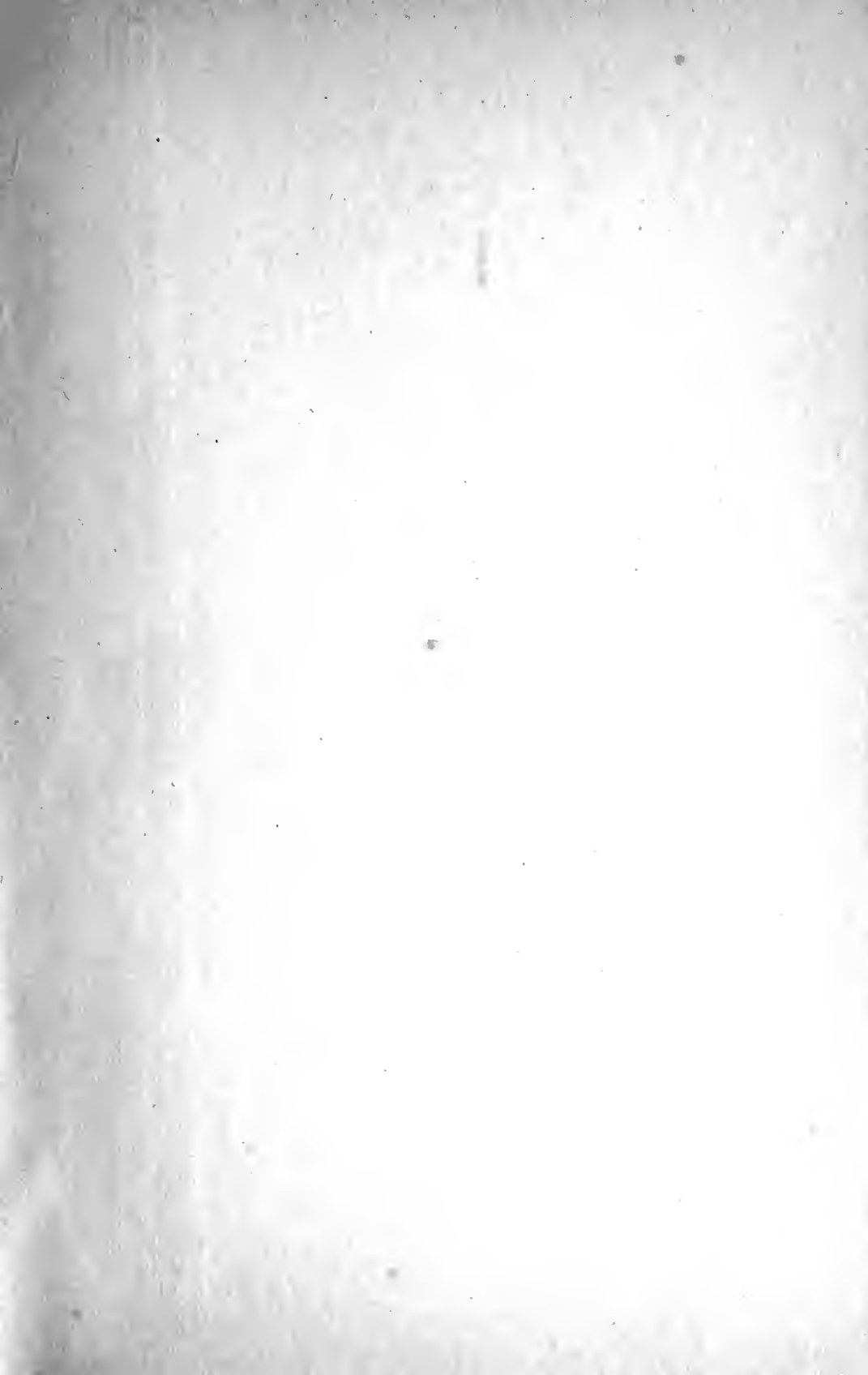












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